

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of Claims replaces all prior versions and listings of Claims. Only those Claims being amended herein show their changes in highlighted form, where insertions appear as underlined text (e.g., insertions) while deletions appear as strikethrough text or brackets (e.g., ~~deletions~~ or ~~[[deletions]]~~).

Please amend Claims 25, 27, 47, 49, 60, 62, 72, 74, 87 and 88 as shown below.

1-24. **(Canceled)**

25. **(Currently Amended)** A method of providing percutaneous access, said method comprising:

making an incision through skin;

inserting a guidewire through the incision in the skin and into or through the renal collection system,

percutaneously inserting ~~[[an]]~~ a circumferentially continuous elongate tubular structure through the incision in the skin and over the guidewire and into the renal collection system, the elongate tubular structure comprising a distal region, a proximal region, and a tapered region between the distal region and the proximal region, the distal region having a first, folded, smaller cross-sectional profile and longitudinal creases, the proximal region having a second, greater cross-sectional profile, the longitudinal creases of the distal region comprising two creased outer sections that lie on a perimeter of the distal region and face each other and two creased inner sections that lie within the perimeter of the distal region and face away from each other, all of the longitudinal creases generally positioned on one side of the distal region;

inflating a balloon that is positioned within an interior lumen of said folded distal region of said elongate tubular structure to expand and unfold said distal region of said elongate tubular structure radially around its longitudinal axis from said first, smaller cross-sectional profile to said second, greater cross-sectional profile;

releasing the elongate tubular structure from a constraining tubular jacket, the constraining tubular jacket sharing the same longitudinal axis as the elongate tubular

structure, wherein releasing the elongate tubular structure from the constraining tubular jacket comprises tearing said tubular jacket along a perforation; and

removing said balloon from said distal region of said elongate tubular structure to open the interior lumen in said elongate tubular structure, the interior lumen open to an external environment outside the skin on its proximal end and open to the renal collection system on its distal end.

26. **(Canceled)**

27. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 25, wherein the inflating a balloon is accomplished using a balloon catheter positioned within the interior lumen of the distal region of the elongate tubular structure.

28. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 25, wherein the inflating a balloon comprises radially expanding said balloon.

29.-46. **(Canceled)**

47. **(Currently Amended)** A method of providing percutaneous access, said method comprising:

making an incision through skin;

inserting a guidewire through the incision in the skin and into or through the renal collection system,

percutaneously inserting ~~[[an]]~~ a circumferentially continuous elongate tubular structure through the incision in the skin and over the guidewire and into the renal collection system, the elongate tubular structure comprising a distal region, a proximal region, and a tapered region between the distal region and the proximal region, the distal region having a first, folded, smaller cross-sectional profile, longitudinal creases, and a beveled distal tip, the proximal region having a second, greater cross-sectional profile, the longitudinal creases comprising two creased outer sections that lie on a perimeter of the distal region and face each other and two creased inner sections that lie within the perimeter of the distal region and face away from each other, the beveled distal tip comprising a leading edge and a trailing edge, all of the longitudinal creases positioned generally opposite the side of the distal region on which the leading edge is positioned

such that no longitudinal creases are positioned on the same side of the distal region on which the leading edge is positioned;

inflating a balloon that is positioned within an interior lumen of said folded distal region of said elongate tubular structure to expand and unfold said distal region of said elongate tubular structure from said first, smaller cross-sectional profile to said second, greater cross-sectional profile;

releasing the elongate tubular structure from a constraint, the constraint sharing the same longitudinal axis as the elongate tubular structure, wherein releasing the elongate tubular structure from a constraint comprises tearing said constraint along a perforation; and

removing said balloon from said distal region of said elongate tubular structure to open the interior lumen in said elongate tubular structure, the interior lumen open to an external environment outside the skin on its proximal end and open to the renal collection system through said beveled distal tip.

48. **(Canceled)**

49. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 47, wherein the inflating a balloon is accomplished using a balloon catheter positioned within the interior lumen of the distal region of the elongate tubular structure.

50. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 47, wherein the inflating a balloon comprises radially expanding said balloon.

51.-59. **(Canceled)**

60. **(Currently Amended)** A method of providing percutaneous access, said method comprising:

making an incision through skin;

inserting a guidewire through the incision in the skin and into or through the renal collection system,

percutaneously inserting [[an]]a circumferentially continuous elongate tubular structure over the guidewire and into the renal collection system, the elongate tubular structure comprising a distal region, a proximal region, and a tapered region between the distal region and the proximal region, the distal region having a first, folded, smaller

cross-sectional profile and longitudinal creases, the proximal region having a second, unfolded, greater cross-sectional profile, the longitudinal creases of the distal region comprising two creased outer sections that lie on a perimeter of the distal region and face each other and two creased inner sections that lie within the perimeter of the distal region and face away from each other, all of the longitudinal creases generally positioned on one side of the distal region;

inflating a balloon that is positioned within an interior lumen of said folded distal region of said elongate tubular structure to expand and unfold said distal region of said elongate tubular structure from said first, smaller cross-sectional profile to said second, greater cross-sectional profile;

releasing the elongate tubular structure from a constraining tubular jacket, the constraining tubular jacket sharing the same longitudinal axis as the elongate tubular structure, wherein releasing the elongate tubular structure from the tubular jacket comprises tearing said tubular jacket along a score line; and

removing said balloon from said distal region of said elongate tubular structure to open a lumen in said elongate tubular structure, the lumen open to an external environment outside the skin on its proximal end and open to the renal collection system on its distal end.

61. **(Canceled)**

62. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 60, wherein the inflating a balloon is accomplished using a balloon catheter positioned within the interior lumen of the distal region of the elongate tubular structure.

63. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 60, wherein the inflating a balloon comprises radially expanding said balloon.

64.-71. **(Canceled)**

72. **(Currently Amended)** A method of providing percutaneous access, said method comprising:

making an incision through skin;

inserting a guidewire through the incision in the skin and into or through the renal collection system,

percutaneously inserting ~~[[an]]~~ a circumferentially continuous elongate tubular structure through the skin over the guidewire and into the renal collection system, the elongate tubular structure comprising a distal region, a proximal region, and a tapered region between the distal region and the proximal region, the distal region having a first, smaller cross-sectional profile, longitudinal creases, and a beveled distal tip, the proximal region having a second, greater cross-sectional profile, the longitudinal creases comprising two creased outer sections that lie on a perimeter of the distal region and face each other and two creased inner sections that lie within the perimeter of the distal region and face away from each other, the beveled distal tip comprising a leading edge and a trailing edge, all of the longitudinal creases positioned generally opposite the side of the distal region on which the leading edge is positioned such that no longitudinal creases are positioned on the same side of the distal region on which the leading edge is positioned;

inflating a balloon that is positioned within an interior lumen of said folded distal region of said elongate tubular structure to expand said distal region of said elongate tubular structure from said first, smaller cross-sectional profile to said second, greater cross-sectional profile;

releasing the elongate tubular structure from a constraint, the constraint sharing the same longitudinal axis as the elongate tubular structure, wherein releasing the elongate tubular structure from the constraint comprises tearing said constraint along a score line; and

removing said balloon from said distal region of said elongate tubular structure to open a lumen in said elongate tubular structure, the lumen open to an external environment outside the skin on its proximal end and open to the renal collection system through said beveled distal tip.

73. **(Canceled)**

74. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 72, wherein the inflating a balloon is accomplished using a balloon catheter positioned within the interior lumen of the distal region of the elongate tubular structure.

75. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 72, wherein the inflating a balloon comprises radially expanding said balloon.

76.-82. (Canceled)

83. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 25, further comprising the step of separating said tubular jacket from said elongate tubular structure.

84. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 47, further comprising the step of separating said constraint from said elongate tubular structure.

85. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 60, further comprising the step of separating said tubular jacket from said elongate tubular structure.

86. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 72, further comprising the step of separating said constraint from said elongate tubular structure.

87. (Currently Amended) A method of providing percutaneous access, said method comprising:

making an incision through skin;

inserting a guidewire through the incision in the skin and into or through the renal collection system,

percutaneously inserting [[an]]a circumferentially continuous elongate tubular structure through the incision in the skin over the guidewire and into the renal collection system, the elongate tubular structure comprising a distal region, a proximal region, and a tapered region between the distal region and the proximal region, the distal region having a first, folded, substantially continuous, smaller cross-sectional profile and longitudinal creases, the proximal region having a second, unfolded, greater cross-sectional profile, the longitudinal creases of the distal region comprising two creased outer sections that lie on a perimeter of the distal region and face each other and two creased inner sections that lie within the perimeter of the distal region and face away from each other, all of the longitudinal creases generally positioned on one side of the distal region;

inflating a balloon positioned within an interior lumen of said folded distal region of said elongate tubular structure to expand and unfold said distal region of said elongate tubular structure from said first, folded, substantially continuous, smaller cross-sectional profile to said second, unfolded, greater cross-sectional profile; and

removing said balloon from the interior lumen of said distal region of said elongate tubular structure to open the interior lumen in said elongate tubular structure, the

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interior lumen open to an external environment outside the skin on its proximal end and open to the renal collection system on its distal end.

88. **(Currently Amended)** The method of Claim 87, wherein the inflating a balloon is accomplished using a balloon catheter positioned within the interior lumen of the distal region of the elongate tubular structure.

89. **(Previously Presented)** The method of Claim 87, wherein the inflating a balloon comprises radially expanding said balloon.

90. **(Canceled)**